

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Leisure & Development Committee

Lansdowne Shelter Portrush Expressions of Interest

11th August 2015

For Decision

Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Transition & Transformation Prosperity Health & Wellbeing Cohesive Community
Lead Officer	Paul Beattie – Head of Prosperity and Place Alan Jeffers – Regeneration Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Expressions of Interest for Lansdowne Shelter and options for the future.

Background

The Lansdowne Shelter (the Shelter) is situated on the north eastern extremity of the Portrush peninsula. The immediate area is heavily protected with statutory designations including a National Nature Reserve at the adjacent Portandhu site. The Shelter is listed (HB03/10/061) as a 'Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest'.

Originally opened c.1860 as the first purpose built lifeboat shelter in Portrush, over the years its importance and relevance have waned to the extent major repairs were required in 2012 in an effort to secure the building's future.

Following Coleraine Borough Council's decision not to pursue a change of use for the Shelter through the statutory planning process, Council subsequently commissioned the Lansdowne area masterplan project which included both the Shelter and the adjacent Portandhu harbour within its broader strategic context.

When subsequently adopting the masterplan in November 2014 Council requested an Expressions of Interest (EoI) exercise be undertaken to establish the nature and extent of community and commercial interest in the Shelter. Council also requested that a link should be required between the Shelter and the adjacent Portandhu harbour. There is no historic or operational link between the Shelter and Portandhu harbour apart from sharing a common general local maritime heritage.

The Department for Social Development subsequently agreed to absorb the adopted Lansdowne Masterplan within the Portrush Regeneration Strategy.

O'Connor Kennedy Turtle, represented by Mr Henry Taggart, were commissioned to support Council through the Expressions of Interest process.

Following the conclusion of the Lansdowne Masterplan project an approach was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for possible financial support in appropriately regenerating the eastern side of

the Portrush peninsula from the Arcadia to Ramore Head, including both the Shelter and Portandhu. While this approach was welcomed and met positively by the Fund, their opinions were provided without prejudice.

Assessment

Respondents were advised that the Expressions of Interest exercise was not a procurement process.

The promotional brochure was released in March 2015 and the process was advertised through local and regional newspaper exposure, websites and a notice board attached to the building.

Seven written responses were received by the closing date of 5th June 2015.

An Assessment Panel of Council Officers convened on 24th June and concluded the responses fell into two distinct groups: those with absolutely no reasonable expectation of fulfilling the opportunity which the Shelter represents, and a group of four responses which fell well short of meeting the reasonable criteria set out for assessing the responses on economic grounds:

Lansdowne Shelter Year 1 financial projections

	Causeway Coast Kayak Association & assoc.	North Antrim Auction Rooms	Portrush Buildings Preservation Trust	Mr Keith Douthart
	£	£	£	£
Contribution to CCG	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	12,000
Shelter operating costs	Not provided	4,220	1,500	Not provided
Proposer's income	9,300	127,803	2,500	Not provided
Proposer's outgoings	9,300	128,552	1,500	15,000

Of the four better responses there was no single best response. All demonstrated gaps in providing even basic operational information. None included any reasonable provision for Council to receive a net financial contribution.

Expressed concern

There is an inherent concern that the Expressions of Interest process is not harmonised with the proposed regeneration of the Lansdowne area. Ideally an indication of the Lansdowne Shelter's long term occupation and function should be outlined in Stage 2 of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to sensitively regenerate the entire Lansdowne Masterplan area together with Ramore Head and the Arcadia.

Recommendations

The Way Forward

1. Respondents should be advised that the Expressions of Interest process was inconclusive.
2. Council should submit a Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for support in addressing the appropriate regeneration of the Lansdowne area.
3. The Expressions of Interest process should be reviewed again as part of a possible Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. None of the work undertaken by the respondents is therefore nugatory if the Stage 2 bid proceeds.